

## Pine Point, Scarborough

The quiet, wildlife-rich salt marsh along the Nonesuch River in Scarborough belies the nearby commercial development on US 1 to the north and the busy tourist infrastructure of Old Orchard Beach to the south. Birders frequent the marsh to watch egrets and herons, osprey and migrating shorebirds, while the shifting sands at the mouth of the river are some of the most productive clam flats in southern Maine, supporting a thriving local shellfish industry. A look out from the Pine Point town pier at low tide often includes more than a dozen skiffs beached out on the flats, as their wader-clad owners dig nearby for clams.



The town pier at Pine Point provides recreational access for



paddlers and weekend boaters via a boat ramp, as well as commercial fishing access via a recently revamped wharf. Though primarily used by lobstermen, the town wharf also supports tuna fishermen and oyster farmers, while clam harvesters rely on the facility's parking area for access to the water. In 2011, the Land for Maine's Future Board allocated \$252,000 to acquire a working waterfront covenant on the Pine Point property, ensuring commercial

fishing access for Scarborough fishermen into the future. The money allowed the town to upgrade the wharf, which included adding a pair of cranes which make it much easier for fishermen to load and unload their boats.



Commercial clam digger Tim Downs' family has been fishing in Scarborough since the 1630's, and both his father and grandfather dug for clams on the Nonesuch River flats. Downs says the 43 commercial clammers in Scarborough rely on the Pine Point parking area and boat ramp for access to the flats. He says, "This lot has changed dramatically in 40 years. When I was a kid people would store boats here, they'd store traps here, whatever they needed it for. Over the years, it has tried to get a little more organized and now we have a beautiful facility, but parking has become more limited for clammers. Back when I was a kid, all the people that dug clams lived down here, but now there isn't a clam digger in the world that can afford to live in Pine Point anymore, and the geography of the river

makes this the only spot where you can access the river."

Clammer Dave Green adds, “As a clammer, the only thing we really need out here is a place to park our truck and a place to put our trailer to launch a boat. Sometimes that’s twice a day, sometimes that’s four times a day, depending on the tides. The wharf is great, and it was money well spent. We now have aquaculture using the facility, and I’m sure it has made things a hundred times easier for the lobstermen to have cranes and a good facility for them to come to that is basically open to them 24/7.”

The aquaculture Green mentions is Nonesuch Oysters, an oyster farm that leases 6.8 acres in the river to grow the oysters that it markets to restaurants from Portland to New York. Local Abigail Carroll founded Nonesuch Oysters in 2010 and she now employs a full-time operations manager and a stable of part-time workers. The improvements at Pine Point came at a perfect time for the company which has a licensing deal with the town that allows them to keep their floating dock attached to the town’s wharf. Carroll explains, “Under our floating dock is an upweller, which is an oyster nursery, and the first stage of oyster growth happens in there. We were here before the pier got rebuilt and everyone was really excited about the improvements. It was important for us because the town lets us keep our dock here, and we keep our gear here. It’s been a huge thing for us, and it allows us to be a bigger company.”

In addition to farming oysters, Nonesuch Oysters also gives tours of the farm, bringing more than 300 people out on the river in the summer of 2016. The company also markets a line of skin

care products made with seaweed harvested locally. Carroll adds, “Having a community that’s really willing to invest in this place gives a new sense of self-esteem to the waterfront. I feel very protective of these working waterfronts in Maine – it’s good to have some grit, it’s good to smell bait. I just think that we can’t lose these traditions in Maine. There are other cities where the waterfront has just become a big mall, and I would hate to see that happen here in Maine.”

